

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-11. (Canceled)

12. (Original) A speech encoding method comprising the steps of:

dividing an input speech signal into frames each having a predetermined length;

obtaining a pitch period of a future frame with respect to a current frame to be encoded; and

encoding the pitch period.

13. (Original) A speech encoding method comprising the steps of:

dividing an input speech signal into frames each having a predetermined length, and further dividing a speech signal of each frame into subframes;

obtaining a predictive pitch period of a subframe in a current frame by using pitch periods of at least two frames of the current frame to be encoded and past and future frames with respect to the current frame; and

obtaining a pitch period of a subframe in the current frame by using the predicted pitch period.

14. (Original) A method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of encoding the pitch period of the subframe in the current frame.

15. (Original) A method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of preparing a pitch filter for suppressing or emphasizing a pitch period component of an input

speech signal, and determining a transfer function for said pitch filter by using the pitch period of the subframe in the current frame.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Original) A method according to claim 13, wherein the step of obtaining the pitch period of the frame comprises adaptively deciding a pitch period analysis position for each frame.

18. (Original) A method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of selecting a method of obtaining a pitch period of a subframe in the current frame in accordance with continuity of pitch periods.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Original) A speech encoding apparatus comprising:
means for dividing an input speech signal into frames each having a predetermined length;
means for obtaining a pitch period of a future frame with respect to a current frame to be encoded; and
means for encoding the pitch period obtained by said means for obtaining the pitch period.

21. (Original) A speech encoding apparatus comprising:

a divider section for dividing an input speech signal into frames each having a predetermined length, and further dividing a speech signal of each frame into subframes;

a predicted subframe pitch period calculation section for obtaining a predicted pitch period of a subframe in a current frame by using pitch periods of at least two frames of the current frame to be encoded and past and future frames with respect to the current frame; and

a subframe pitch period calculation section for obtaining a pitch period of a subframe in the current frame by using the predicted pitch period.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Original) A recording medium on which a program is recorded, said program being used to execute processing of dividing an input speech signal into frames each having a predetermined length, and obtaining a pitch period of a future frame with respect to a current frame to be encoded, and processing of encoding the pitch period.

24. (Original) A recording medium on which a program is recorded, said program being used to execute processing of dividing an input speech signal into frames each having a predetermined length, further dividing a speech signal of each frame into subframes, and obtaining a predicted pitch period of a subframe in a current frame by using pitch periods of at least two frames of the current frame to be encoded and past and future frames with respect to the current frame, and processing of obtaining a pitch period of a subframe in the current frame by using the predicted pitch period.

25. (Canceled)